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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/211,718	12/14/1998	ERIC R. FOSSUM	08305/015001	9540

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Thomas J. D'Amico
DICKSTEIN SHAPIRO MORIN & OSHINSKY LLP
2101 L Street NW
Washington, DC 20037-1526

EXAMINER

GENCO, BRIAN C

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2615	

DATE MAILED: 12/02/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/211,718

Applicant(s)

FOSSUM ET AL.

Examiner

Brian C Genco

Art Unit

2615

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 and 17-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 and 17-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____ |

Art Unit: 2615

Applicant's amendment filed August 30, 2004 has been fully considered by the Examiner. Applicant's arguments have overcome the grounds of rejection with the Spivey reference as the base reference. Upon further consideration of the claims and the art of record a new grounds of rejection with the Schick reference are presented herein bellow.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claim 21 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. There is no description in the specification of the instant invention that said row logic includes row drivers and row memory.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claims 1-4, 9-11, 13 and 17-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over (USPN 5,834,782 to Schick et al.) in view of (USPN 6,396,539 to Heller et al.).

In regards to claim 1 Schick discloses a CMOS image sensor circuit, comprising:

Art Unit: 2615

a CMOS image sensor chip comprising an image sensor portion comprising an array of pixels arranged in rows and columns, and a control portion comprising image sensor logic, said image sensor logic being electrically connected to said image sensor portion (e.g., Figs. 2a and 2b; column 4, lines 46-56), said image sensor logic including row logic associated with each of said rows individually, and chip logic associated with parts of said image sensor portion other than rows individually, said image sensor portion having a first area and a second area (e.g., column 5, lines 15-20 wherein the first area is on one side of the column drive transistors which have been moved away from the edge, and the second area is on the other side of the column drive transistors),

said chip being formed to have at least a first set of parallel edges including a first edge and a second edge, and a second set of parallel edges, different than said first set of parallel edges, said second set of parallel edges including a third edge and a fourth edge (e.g., Figs. 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b, wherein as shown in Fig. 2a the first edge is on the top, the second edge is on the bottom, the third edge is on the left, and the fourth edge is on the right),

said image sensor portion including imaging pixels extending between said first edge, said second edge, and said third edge, such that imaging pixels of said first area of said image sensor portion are adjacent said first edge and said third edge of said chip and imaging pixels of said second area of said image sensor portion are adjacent said second edge and said third edge of said chip (e.g., Figs. 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b; column 5, lines 15-20),

said row logic being physically located inside said image sensor portion in place of a plurality of pixels of the array forming said image sensor portion (e.g., column 5, lines 15-20);
and

It is also known in the art to use on-chip pixel interpolation as taught by Heller et al, herein Heller. Heller discloses having an on-chip memory and controller unit for storing defective pixel locations so that the controller can interpolate values for the defective pixels from the surrounding pixels (e.g., column 8, lines 39-65; column 4, lines 5-9). Note that Heller discloses that it is preferable to include as much circuitry on-chip in order to reduce cost (column 1, line 56 – column 2, line 36). Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have preformed pixel interpolation on-chip in order to reduce cost. Furthermore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have place the pixel interpolator between said image area and said fourth edge so as to maintain the chip structure disclosed by Schick to still enable butting for the creation of a large format array, namely placing the pixel interpolator in the non-active region 202 of Fig. 2A.

In regards to claim 2 Examiner notes that Schick does not explicitly disclose that the row logic is formed in place of two columns of the array, however, it is clear from Schick's disclosure that the row logic would take the place of the number of columns that the row logic was wide, i.e., if the row logic was two pixels wide then it would take the place of two columns. Examiner notes that it is well known in the art to provide row logic that is two pixels wide or less in order to minimize the amount of dead space on the image sensor. Official Notice is taken. As such, one of ordinary skill in the art would have provided row logic that is two pixels wide or less in order to minimize the amount of dead space on the image sensor.

In regards to claim 3 see Fig. 1b and column 4, line 57 – column 5, line 14.

In regards to claim 4, see Fig. 1a.

In regards to claim 9 see Examiners notes on the rejection of claim 1. Examiner notes that the term centralized is being interpreted to mean anywhere not on an edge.

In regards to claim 10 see Figs. 1b, 1c, 3, 4a.

In regards to claim 11 see Examiners notes on the rejection of claim 1. Note column 5, lines 21-35 wherein the outputs of each image sensor are combined. Further note that the claimed limitation of integrating the control portions of said at least two CMOS image sensors is inherent with providing a large format image sensor as disclosed by Schick. Examiner notes that the term centralized is being interpreted to mean anywhere not on an edge.

In regards to claim 13 see Examiners notes on the rejection of claim 1. Note the disclosure of abutting image sensor together in Fig. 1b so as to form a large format array.

In regards to claim 17 see Examiners notes on the rejection of claim 1. Examiner notes that the term centralized is being interpreted to mean anywhere not on an edge.

In regards to claim 18 see Examiners notes on the rejection of claims 1 and 11

In regards to claim 19 see Examiners notes on the rejection of claim 2.

In regards to claim 20 note that Schick discloses the row logic is inactive in column 5, lines 15-20.

In regards to claim 21 see Examiners notes on the rejection of claim 1. Examiner notes that it is extremely well known for row logic in CMOS image sensors to have row drivers and row memory in order to decode a row selection input. Official notice is taken. Therefore it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to have utilized row drivers and row memory in order to decode a row selection input of Schick's CMOS image sensor.

In regards to claim 22 see Examiners notes on the rejection of claim 1. See also Figs. 1b, and 1c. Note that image sensors 11 and 12 of Fig. 3, sensors 11 and 21 of Fig. 4A.

Claims 5 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over (USPN 5,834,782 to Schick et al.) in view of (USPN 6,396,539 to Heller et al.) in further view of (USPN 5,886,353 to Spivey et al.).

In regards to claims 5 and 12 see Examiners notes on the rejection of claims 1 and 11. Schick nor Heller disclose nor preclude interpolating missing pixels on said chip caused by both said row select logic and by spaces between pixel pitches along abutted edges of said image sensor chips. It is know to do this as taught by Spivey on column 15, lines 30-37 in order to reduce the effect of dead spots. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have interpolated missing pixels caused by both said row select logic and by spaces between said image sensor chips in order to reduce the effect of dead spots.

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over (USPN 5,834,782 to Schick et al.) in view of (USPN 6,396,539 to Heller et al.) in view of (USPN 5,510,623 to Sayag).

In regards to claim 6 Examiner notes that while Schick discloses that the row logic is moved away from the edge, there is no disclosure that it is necessarily in the center of the plurality of pixels. Sayag discloses the known structure of providing the row logic in the center of the plurality of pixels as shown in Fig. 1. Therefore it would have been obvious to one skilled

Art Unit: 2615

in the art at the time of the invention to have provided the row logic in the center as suggested by Schick and explicitly disclosed by Sayag in order to provide a symmetric image sensor.

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over (USPN 5,834,782 to Schick et al.) in view of (USPN 6,396,539 to Heller et al.) in view of (US PG PUB 20020000549 to Spartiotis et al.).

In regards to claim 7, neither Schick nor Heller disclose the usage of a guard ring. Spartiotis discloses to use a guard ring element 40 in paragraph 0047 in order to reduce edge non-uniformities in the region of the edge-most contacts. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have added a guard ring to Schick's image sensors in order to reduce edge non-uniformities in the region of the edge-most contacts.

Claim 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over (USPN 5,834,782 to Schick et al.) in view of (USPN 5,886,353 to Spivey et al.).

In regards to claim 8 Schick discloses a method of capturing an image, comprising:
providing at least two image sensor chips, each chip having first and second edges and an image sensor array of imaging pixels that comes within two pixel pitches of said first and second edges, and includes a control portion with row selecting logic in place of a plurality of central pixels of the image sensor array (e.g., column 5, lines 4-20; Fig. 1b);
abutting said image sensor chips along at least one of corresponding first and second edges (e.g., Figs. 1B, 1C, 3, and 4A-4C).

Art Unit: 2615

Schick does not disclose nor preclude interpolating missing pixels on said chip caused by both said row select logic and by spaces between pixel pitches along abutted edges of said image sensor chips. It is known to do this as taught by Spivey on column 15, lines 30-37 in order to reduce the effect of dead spots. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have interpolated missing pixels caused by both said row select logic and by spaces between said image sensor chips in order to reduce the effect of dead spots.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian C. Genco who can be reached by phone at 703-305-7881 or by fax at 703-746-8325. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday 8:30am to 4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Andrew Christensen can be reached on 703-308-9644. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the customer service office whose telephone number is 703-308-4357.

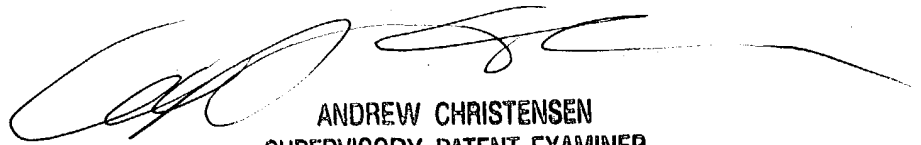
Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR

Art Unit: 2615

system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Brian C Genco
Examiner
Art Unit 2615

November 29, 2004

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Christensen', is written over a horizontal line.

ANDREW CHRISTENSEN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600